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Administrator

Michael Regan, Jennifer Granholm Interviewed On C-SPAN.

C-SPAN[®] (8/15) featured the EPA Administrator and Energy Secretary in a “conversation about the opportunity we haven in clean energy.” The global clean energy market “is projected to reach at a minimum \$23 trillion by the end of this decade.” Regan said, “The EPA has been working hand-in-hand with colleagues all across the administration to think about how we seize the moment. This is a moment in time we must take advantage of.”

Air

Environmentalists Sue EPA Over AZ Emissions Exemption.

Bloomberg BNA (8/13, Hijazi) reports the Center for Biological Diversity filed a “petition for review with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit” Friday “over an exemption that they say scraps emissions protections from Arizona agricultural equipment.” The exemption “comes from Arizona’s State Implementation Plan that addresses emissions as required under National Ambient Air Quality Standards.”

Climate Change

EPA Comments Urge FERC To Consider Climate Costs.

Inside EPA (8/13) reports, “EPA regional offices are urging the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to offer more robust climate analyses of two proposed natural gas infrastructure projects, including use of the social cost of carbon (SCC) metric, adding to the increasing pressure on the commission for tougher climate reviews. The recent comments from the regional offices come after Biden EPA officials earlier this year pressed FERC to conduct more-thorough assessments of the climate implications of its gas pipeline approvals.”

Many Top Republicans No Longer Dispute Climate Change.

The New York Times (8/13, Friedman, Davenport) reported that following “a decade of disputing the existence of climate change, many leading Republicans are shifting their posture amid deadly heat waves, devastating drought and ferocious wildfires that have bludgeoned their districts and unnerved their constituents back home.” However, the Times said even with “many now acknowledging the solid science that emissions from burning oil, gas and coal have raised Earth’s temperature,” their “growing acceptance of the reality of climate change has not translated into support for the one strategy that scientists said in a major United Nations report this week is imperative to avert an even more harrowing future: stop burning fossil fuels.” The Times added Republicans “instead...want to spend billions to prepare communities to cope with extreme weather, but are trying to block efforts by Democrats to cut the emissions that are fueling the disasters in the first place.”

Representative Says World Will Be Watching US Example On Climate Change Ahead Of COP26.

S&P Global Platts (8/13, Melvin, Gordon) reported that “global leaders will meet Nov. 1-12 for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) with the goal of cementing 2030 emissions

targets that put major economies on the path to net-zero emissions by 2050 in order to contain temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.” Rep. Sean Casten (D-IL) “told S&P Global Platts that the US must head to Glasgow with binding legislation that commits the country to aggressive climate action – not just aspirational targets and pledges – if President Joe Biden wants to be taken seriously as a global leader in fighting the climate crisis.” Casten said, “There’s a very keen awareness that when the United States gets to Glasgow, the rest of the world is not going to be watching our lips ... they’re going to be watching our feet.”

Energy Company Shares See No Effect From UN Climate Report.

Bloomberg (8/15, Wittenstein, Bellusci) reports the “sobering United Nations-backed report on global warming last week prompted a lot of hand wringing from governments and the general public about fossil fuels” but the response “from investors in the oil and gas industry? A big shrug.” Specifically, “shares of energy companies, which led the S&P 500 higher for much of the year, ended the week little changed.” Oil prices “rebounded from a selloff earlier in the month, despite the warnings that the world must wean itself off fossil fuels, and fast.”

Advocates Say Hydrogen Will Become More Environmentally Safe.

The AP (8/13, Gillispie, Krisher) reported that “hydrogen, the most abundant element in the universe, is increasingly viewed, along with electric vehicles, as one way to slow the environmentally destructive impact of the planet’s 1.2 billion vehicles, most of which burn gasoline and diesel fuel.” Vehicle, train and airplane manufacturers “are beginning to embrace hydrogen fuel cell technologies as a way forward.” For now, the AP said, “the hydrogen that is produced globally each year, mainly for refineries and fertilizer manufacturing, is made using natural gas or coal” – a process that “pollutes the air, warming the planet rather than saving it.” But advocates of hydrogen-powered transportation “say that in the long run, hydrogen production is destined to become more environmentally safe.”

Study Challenges Assumptive Low-Carbon Utility Of Blue Hydrogen.

The Casper (WY) Star-Tribune (8/15, Pollack) reports a new study by researchers at Cornell University and Stanford University “says blue hydrogen may be worse for the climate than previously thought.” The analysis “found that the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions from blue hydrogen are only about 9-12% lower compared with grey, more than 20% higher than natural gas and coal and 60% higher than diesel.” The study reads, “Often, blue hydrogen is described as having zero or low greenhouse gas emissions,” adding, “however, this is not true: not all of carbon dioxide emissions can be captured, and some carbon dioxide is emitted during the production of blue hydrogen.”

Also reporting is Politico (8/13, Choi).

Analysis Shows Green Hydrogen Could Reach Cost Parity With Other Production Methods Within Next Ten Years.

Axios (8/13, Freedman) reported a new analysis by the ICF Climate Center “shows that the cost of zero-carbon, green hydrogen could reach parity with more greenhouse-gas intensive ways of making the gas in as little as the next decade.” Green hydrogen broadly “is drawing increasing interest from electricity producers, manufacturers, trucking companies, investors and the federal government as a clean method of energy storage on the horizon.” Further, the “rate at which the cost of green hydrogen comes down

could depend considerably on government incentives, such as a tax credit, to incentivize this technology.” However, the US is currently “behind Europe and Japan in investing in green hydrogen technologies.”

Port Of Corpus Christi, Howard Energy Partners Agree To Convert Refinery Into Region’s First Carbon-Neutral, Blue Hydrogen Production Facility.

The *Houston Chronicle* (8/13, de Luna) reported the Port of Corpus Christi and San Antonio pipeline operator Howard Energy Partners on Thursday “said they have agreed to convert Howard’s Javelina refinery into the region’s first carbon-neutral, blue hydrogen production facility.” The move by the Port “is in response to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report released this month,” which “calls for the elimination of carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 and for the development of facilities to capture and permanently store carbon.” The Port “hopes to become the nation’s premier carbon capture and sequestration management hub.” Officials “said they are committed to developing facilities to collect and pressurize carbon dioxide for injection into geological formations under the Gulf of Mexico.”

Shell, Chevron Earn Worst Scores On New Methane Benchmark.

Reuters (8/14, Slavin) reports Geofinancial Analytics has released its MethaneScan benchmark scores for oil and gas producers “based on observed methane emissions in the year to this July.” In the first snapshot of the top 15 producers, “Royal Dutch Shell and Chevron are the worst performers, followed by ConocoPhillips, Marathon Oil and ExxonMobil.” Geofinancial Analytic CEO Mark Kriss said, “The airborne methane in the environs of Chevron and Shell across all their on-shore wellheads in the geographies we cover were slightly higher than Exxon’s.” A Chevron spokesperson said, “We are concerned that the underlying data and assumptions used in (Geofinancial’s) analysis may not be sufficiently robust to accurately attribute emissions to specific operators or support the generation of a company-by-company credit-style ranking for methane emissions in select basins in North America.” However, the spokesperson added that “over time, their models and analysis have the potential to improve as additional information becomes available to them.”

CRC Backs Infrastructure Bill’s Investment In Carbon Capture Technology.

The *Bakersfield (CA) Californian* (8/14, Cox) reports, “Kern County could become one of four federally funded technological hubs for removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and burying it permanently underground if the House approves President Joe Biden’s \$1 trillion infrastructure plan.” The bipartisan bill passed by the Senate last Tuesday “would spend \$3.5 billion on carbon capture and sequestration” and has the support of California Resources Corp., “the local oil producer behind two publicly disclosed CCS projects in Kern.” The company “called carbon capture technology a ‘real solution’ for helping the state decarbonize and meet its emissions reduction goals under the Paris Climate Accord.” According to the *Californian*, CRC’s proposed CalCapture “would remove carbon dioxide from the smokestack of its 550-megawatt Elk Hills Power Plant then inject it into underground oil formations to enhance the company’s nearby oil extraction.”

US Coal And Oil Demand On The Rise Again In Blow To Climate Goals.

The *Financial Times* (8/15, McCormick, Jacobs) reports, "America's appetite for fossil fuels has come roaring back as the economy cranks into gear, providing a boost to energy groups but flying in..."

Developers See Environmental Opportunity To Harvest Coal Mine Gas.

The AP (8/10, Litvak) reports, "There is so much unwanted gas coming out of American coal mines — those that still produce coal and even those that have long quit — that federal data suggests it outpaces the carbon emissions footprint of the entire U.S. petrochemical industry." The amount is greater than the greenhouse gas impact "of all iron, steel and coke plants in the country." For "environmentalists and entrepreneurs alike, this represents a huge, barely-tapped resource for preventing these emissions and getting paid to do so." Ben Apple of Maryland-based project developer Environmental Commodities Corporation said the "The potential is quite large in the U.S." for a system to prevent mine gas — methane — from getting into the atmosphere. "Even burning that gas, not for power but just to get rid of it, is far better for the environment than doing nothing."

Plan To Reopen Stibnite Mine Stirs Environmental Debate. CBS News (8/14) reports, for 150 years, miners came to the Stibnite Mine to dig their fortune. A plan to reopen it has stirred an environmental debate. American mining company, Perpetua Resources is looking to "reopen the mine which hasn't been used in more than two decades." After it was closed in the 1990s changes to the "river that flows through the mine site caused the fish to spawn upstream—leaving them without clear passage to the Pacific Ocean." This caused the fish "decay to contaminate the river, but Laurel Sayer, CEO of Perpetua, told CBS News' Jeff Glor the company could clean up the mess left behind by, for one, reconnecting the river." But the "13.2 million acres that make up the section of Idaho where the mine is located was the original home of a Native American tribe known as the Nez Perce or Nimiipuu." Nakia Williamson "said that after losing their land to the gold rush of the 1800s, the Nimiipu have given enough and do not want to give up the mine."

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Editorial/Op Ed/Commentary/Letters

Editorial: Biden Carries The Weight Of History To Glasgow Climate Summit.

The *New York Times* (8/14) editorializes that US climate efforts over the past 30 years "have been a colossal series of missed opportunities." The Times says President Biden carries "the weight of history...as he faces an opportunity to assert American leadership in advance of a global summit on climate change in Glasgow in November." The Times says two policy proposals are "of paramount importance and are essential to honoring Mr. Biden's campaign promise to cut America's emissions in half by 2030." These are "billions in incentives for electric vehicles and for clean energy sources" and "a clean electricity standard that, as currently envisioned, would reward power producers that reduce emissions and penalize those that don't." The Times says Biden will be "the face of America's resolve in Scotland, and he'll need tangible evidence to prove that Washington cares."

Editorial: Democrats Incorrectly Seek To Use Tax Policy To Address Climate Crisis.

In an editorial, the *Washington Times* (8/15) argues that that climate activists are pushing for an “expansive, anti-carbon tax principle that leaps national boundaries and ensures no one can win a trade war by undercutting prices” as governments attempt to battle the climate crisis. The Times argues Congressional Democrats, “united in an embrace of socialistic governance,” are “looking to enact a ‘polluter import fee’ just as the European Union introduces a ‘carbon border adjustment mechanism’ (CBAM).” The Times also argues that it is very likely both new policies will likely run afoul of the World Trade Organization for potentially anti-competitive practices. It concludes that “if competition is to be discarded as an economic principle in favor of restrictive rules that serve a prevailing climate-change agenda, and if ‘green’ fees are to add to life’s financial burdens, color us skeptical.”

Vetter: Inordinate Focus On Methane Cuts Is Misplaced.

Forbes (8/13, Vetter) contributor David Vetter said some media outlets seized on a section of the UN's climate latest climate report “showing that 30-50% of current warming is being caused by methane (chemical formula CH₄), a greenhouse gas at least 28 times more potent than carbon dioxide in its planet-warming potential.” But, he wrote, “breathlessness over the ‘quick fix’ potential of methane is misplaced, experts say.” University of Oxford physics professor Raymond T. Pierrehumbert, for example, said “the report gets the policy implications of the short-lived nature of methane versus the long-lived nature of carbon dioxide completely backwards.” Carbon dioxide “accumulates in the atmosphere over the long term, whereas methane does not, so if you look beyond a limited time frame, you see that excessive investment in methane abatement buys a short term advantage at the cost of greater, and more irreversible, warming later.”

Gray: SEC Should Not Confront Climate Change.

In an op-ed for the *Washington Post* (8/15), former White House Counsel and US Ambassador to the European Union C. Boyden Gray writes that to “confront climate change,” President Biden should “hear from Congress, industry, science and, among regulators, the Environmental Protection Agency.” Instead, he “summoned the nation’s top financial regulators to the Oval Office. Their June meeting followed the Securities and Exchange Commission’s proposal to mandate that public stock issuers disclose their ‘climate risk.’” Gray argues that the SEC’s “congressional mandates do not include regulating the climate. ... If Congress wants the SEC to join (or displace) the EPA as a primary climate regulator, Congress can say so.” Gray argues that “the SEC should stick with its mandate: Focus on material disclosures.”

HChron: Houston Must Play Leading Role In Tackling Climate Change.

In an editorial, the *Houston Chronicle* (8/15) argues that “Houston, the energy capital of the world, a city that employs nearly a third of the nation’s jobs in oil and gas extraction and is home to headquarters for virtually every segment of the fossil fuel industry, must play a leading role” in tackling climate change. The Chronicle contends that, “while carbon capture technology is a step in the right direction, American companies can’t make it their sole approach.” Energy corridor companies “must diversify their portfolios by investing in renewable energy rather than relying on emerging technologies to largely buttress their current business models.”

Tomlinson: Technological Advancements Will Help Increase EV Sales.

Houston Chronicle (8/16) contributor Chris Tomlinson says advancements in electric vehicle battery technology and the installation of charging infrastructure across the US over the next several years will help increase EV sales. Tomlinson concludes, "The EVs going on sale in five years will be far more efficient than what I drive now, and charging will be faster and easier to find."

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Energy Issues

Revising Trump-era Environmental Reviews Could Hinder Biden's Renewable Energy Goals.

The Washington Examiner (8/13, Smith) reported President Biden's plans to invest in large amounts of renewable energy over the next decade "could get caught in a web of environmental permitting requirements." Biden has pledged to reverse Trump-era revisions that shortened environmental reviews, but "many of those changes to federal agency reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, would secure quicker approvals for clean energy projects." Those revisions "would make it easier to build solar farms and wind turbines, transmission lines needed to carry clean power to homes and businesses, and mines that provide critical minerals used in electric car batteries."

Journalist Says Senate Democrats Supported Hydraulic Fracturing Amendment To Protect Future Campaigns.

The Hill (8/13) reports Daily Poster journalist David Sirota said during an interview last week that the seven Democrats senators who voted in favor of a non-binding amendment that would prevent the government from banning hydraulic fracturing did so in order to support their future political campaigns. Sirota said, "Their motivation is most likely to be on record saying that they're opposing a fracking ban in advance of their future election campaigns."

Judge Allows Lawsuit Against TVA To Proceed.

The AP (8/14) reported that "a federal judge has declined to dismiss a lawsuit brought by environmental groups against the Tennessee Valley Authority." U.S. District Judge Thomas Parker's ruling "means the case will proceed, The Commercial Appeal reported." The environmental groups "argue the auto-renewing, 20-year contracts TVA has offered local power companies in its footprint violate the federal law governing the federal government-owned utility." The length of the contracts, the groups argue, would slow the utility's transition away from carbon-based energy sources and hinder its potential efforts to reduce emissions. But TVA "argues that the long-term power agreements don't govern its power supply choices, but other, different planning documents — an argument that Parker appeared to have seen some merit in."

Gohmert Says Renewable Energy Projects A Threat To Birds.

The Dallas Morning News (8/13, Justin) reported Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX) “is citing bird conservancy while targeting some forms of renewable energy production.” During an appearance Thursday on One America News Network, Gohmert “spoke at length about a solar farm on the California-Nevada border, with thousands of acres of ‘concave mirrors that magnify the sun toward three towers that heat up the liquid in there and turn turbines.’” He said “they weren’t anticipating that there would be hundreds and thousands of what they would call ‘flamers.’ Because when the birds fly through, if they survive the windmills, then they hit that magnified sun, explode in flames, and down they go, bird guts all over the mirrors.” Gohmert’s comments “have a kernel of truth to them, according to environmental experts and scientific research.”

Investors Forming SPACs To Take Renewable Energy Firms Public.

Reuters (8/16, Resnick-Ault) reports, “Former U.S. oil investment bankers, portfolio managers and executives have formed over 20 listed blank-check companies to take renewable energy companies public, with more listings expected.” Investors are “rushing to form these companies, known as Special Purpose Acquisition Companies (SPACs), as capital shifts from traditional oil and gas investments to low-carbon alternatives.” More than “412 SPAC IPOs raising \$121 billion have taken place so far in 2021, up from 247 raising \$83 billion total last year, said Jay Ritter, a professor at the University of Florida specializing in IPOs.” Ritter said, “I would expect there would be more energy-related SPAC mergers.” By contrast, “only about three exploration and production SPACs are currently publicly filed with the SEC and none have launched in about 18 months, a sharp contrast with 2016 when oil prices crashed, and investors used SPACs to buy companies in a turnaround bet.”

Biden Administration Fights Climate Change While Urging OPEC To Drill.

Politico (8/15, Lefebvre, Boudreau, Snyder) reports President Biden “is pushing ambitious plans for tackling climate change by weaning the US off fossil fuels – but he’s also taking short-term actions that would make it cheaper and more convenient for Americans to keep driving their gasoline-powered cars.” The White House’s latest moves include urging OPEC and Russia to boost oil production and cut fuel prices, “as well as championing a trillion-dollar infrastructure deal loaded with money for new and wider highways.” The Administration “has also declined to block a series of oil pipeline projects – despite killing Keystone XL – and has greenlit drilling on leased federal land at a faster rate than former President Donald Trump’s agencies had.” Rice University political science professor Mark Jones said, “The Biden administration is caught between what it needs for elections and its long term policy goals. To enact the policies (environmentalists) want enacted, he has to keep the House and Senate in 2022.”

Summers Criticizes Biden’s Effort To Cut Gas Prices. Bloomberg (8/13, Fabian, Westin) reported former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers criticized the Biden Administration’s “efforts to lower the price of gasoline, saying it should be allowed to rise because fossil fuel consumption warms the planet.” Summers said in an interview Friday with Bloomberg TV that the Administration should instead adjust trade and economic policies to help reduce the price of other goods. Summers said, “There’s no more important price to increase in the American economy than the price of carbon-based fuels. This is a perverse kind of step from my point of view. I’d much rather see us do it in other ways than by helping OPEC.”

Industry Leaders React To Biden's Appeal To OPEC. The Midland (TX) Reporter-Telegram (8/11, McEwen) reported on how industry leaders reacted to the Biden Administration's call for OPEC to pump more oil. Permian Basin Petroleum Association President Ben Shepperd said the "Administration is contemplating job killing regulations on American producers, all the while signaling to foreign, state-owned producers, to drill baby drill." Texas Railroad Commissioner Wayne Christian said, "America has proven we do not need to rely on OPEC+ or any other nation for our energy needs. We can produce the natural resources we need right here at home." Texas Oil & Gas Association Todd Staples said, "The best way to ensure Americans and our trade partners have access to clean, affordable and reliable energy is to encourage homegrown, domestic energy that supports jobs and economic growth while continuing our commitment to environmental progress."

Editorial: Biden Can Fight Climate Change Or Have Low Gas Prices, But Not Both. The Washington Post (8/15) editorializes that "President Biden and the Democratic Congress have ambitions to fight climate change and legislative plans to match," but "those plans consist almost entirely of clean-energy mandates and subsidies." Biden and progressives in Congress "have ruled out what the policy economists – and common sense – tell us would permanently curb demand for fossil fuels: a carbon tax, or its first cousin, higher excise taxes on motor fuels." National security adviser Jake Sullivan recently urged OPEC nations to "do more to support the recovery" by pumping more crude oil. The Post asks, "Why would we cede control of the lucrative global oil market to these repressive regimes, much less make ourselves indebted to them for lowering our politically sensitive gas prices?" The Post says the US "stands for a planet that is both cooler and freer from the influence of despots" and "a tax on fossil fuels would further both aims."

Duesterberg: Biden Looking To Outsource US Oil And Gas Industry. Forbes (8/13, Duesterberg) contributor Thomas Duesterberg writes that if the Biden Administration "is serious about creating more good paying jobs in the United States and reducing dependence on unreliable trade partners, while transitioning away from the fossil fuel industry, it would revoke the astonishing request to outsource production of oil and gas" to OPEC. He said the Administration "would also arrest its regulatory assault on the US industry." He added, "Inflation remains a problem, both economic and political, but trading a temporary respite for long-term dependence on foreign sources and job losses is a losing proposition."

Eberhart: Biden's Oil Policies Creating A Political Crisis. Forbes (8/14, Eberhart) contributor Dan Eberhart wrote that Biden "is not the first president to lobby OPEC for more oil," but "none of Biden's predecessors did so while pursuing an aggressive anti-oil agenda." Biden has doubled down on "addressing climate change and vowing to spend whatever it takes to wean Americans off oil and gas." Eberhart says that "Biden is trying to have it both ways." Biden "wants to crack down on the traditional US energy sector and promote burdensome new environmental regulations while keeping prices low for consumers." But, Eberhart says, "the law of supply and demand doesn't work that way." He added, "America has plenty of oil to keep prices at the pump low and the nation secure."

BP, Shell Among Oil Companies Bolstering Venture Capital Arms.

The Wall Street Journal ([*Request Article*](#)) (8/14, McFarlane) reported oil companies including BP and Royal Dutch Shell are bolstering their venture capital arms in order to seek out new low-carbon technologies to help protect their profits from potential swings in the future markets.

Analysis: Fossil Fuel Companies Working On Messaging As Climate Crisis Intensifies.

CNBC (8/15, Rosenbaum) reports fossil fuel companies, such as BP and Shell, “are working hard on their messaging in the climate change era” as more extreme warnings around the climate crisis come from organizations such as the UN’s IPCC. However, some – like Occidental CEO Vicki Hollub – argue that the issue is not the fossil fuel industry writ large, but instead the emissions related to the industry. Therefore, “it follows that if fossil fuel companies can find ways to eliminate emissions, on a large enough scale, maybe they can convince shareholders and stakeholders that they are moving into the future in [a] more sustainable way.” The article notes that Shell is one of many fossil fuel companies that are reinvesting in renewable technologies as a result of this shift.

Cheniere Energy Continues To Work With Regulators On Sabine Pass Leak Issue.

Reuters (8/13) reports Cheniere Energy announced Friday that it “continues to work with regulators to bring two of the five LNG storage tanks at its Sabine Pass export plant in Louisiana back in service following a leak in 2018.” The company announced the week prior that regulators “proposed a \$2.2 million penalty in July for alleged violations related to the 2018 leak.” Cheniere “said in that securities filing it does not expect the tank issue will have a material adverse impact on its financial results or operations,” but “could not say when the tanks might return to service.”

Enbridge Tells Canadian Regulators Oil Could Flow Through Line 3 Pipeline By September.

Natural Gas Intelligence (8/13) reported oil is set “to begin flowing as soon as September through Enbridge Inc.’s disputed Line 3 replacement pipe, moving more Canada supply to the Lower 48, according to a filing with the Canada Energy Regulator (CER).” In the filing, Enbridge said, “Construction of the Line 3 replacement program...could be completed within the next 30 to 60 days, which will allow the Line 3 replacement pipeline to commence service as early as Sept. 15.” Enbridge “disclosed the target in a request for CER approval to collect a shipping toll surcharge that would cover the costs of the \$9 billion project when completion of its hotly contested Minnesota leg enables deliveries.”

Fossil Fuel Companies Deal With Potential Future Of Decarbonization.

The Houston Chronicle (8/14, Osborne) reports fossil fuel companies are beginning to face a potential near-future in which governments across the globe “push to reduce dependence on fossil fuels in a bid to address climate change.” Oil prices have already “fallen below \$70 a barrel amid another surge in COVID-19 infections” but prices “are likely to recover in short-term as the latest wave of the pandemic is brought under control.” However, the long-term prospects for offshore drilling “are dimming as climate change drives the world to drastically reduce its consumption of fossil fuels.”

FERC Releases Favorable Environmental Assessment For Mountain Valley Pipeline.

Natural Gas Intelligence (8/13, Cocklin) reported FERC said in a revised environmental assessment (EA) for the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) that a water crossing method the pipeline developers are

planning to use would not have a significant environmental impact. While the developers' "new plans are likely to increase construction emissions and noise, the EA concluded that the impacts would be short-term and insignificant." MVP spokeswoman Natalie Cox said, "As a natural gas transmission line, a swift conclusion to MVP's construction and start of operation is important for landowners and communities along the route and is vital in our nation's transition to a lower-carbon economy, ensuring continued and reliable public access to affordable energy."

Federal Judge Declines To Issue Injunction Against MVP. The AP (8/15) reports in continuing coverage that US District Judge Elizabeth Dillon declined a motion Friday from Bent Mountain landowner John Coles Terry III for an injunction that would have prevented the developers of the Mountain Valley Pipeline from blasting bedrock on the Virginia mountain where the pipeline is to be laid. Dillon "said Friday her court was not the proper jurisdiction to resolve the dispute, noting that...Terry...had already sought action from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, The Roanoke Times reported." Terry's motion "said the blasting could contaminate his well water and that of others downstream."

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Environmental Justice

Census Data To Guide EJ Plans For Next Decade.

Grist (8/13, Jackson) reports on how the new census data will guide EJ efforts. EPA spokesperson Dominique Joseph "said the new data will be vital to the agency's mapping and screening tools, which use demographic data to identify potential environmental justice concerns." WEACTION for Environmental Justice Community Organizer Pamela Stewart-Martinez said, "The fallout from the census and redistricting will be felt for the next decade and will have everything to do with solving environmental problems and creating new ones."

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Science

Integrated Assessment Models Look For Routes To End Global Warming.

NPR (8/14, Charles) reports that a pathway "in which dangerous changes to the world's climate eventually stop" is the "product of giant computer simulations of the world economy" called integrated assessment models. Each of the models "starts with data about current sources of greenhouse emissions," including cars and power plants. Scientists then "force their virtual worlds to change course, by introducing limits on greenhouse emissions." The models attempt to "satisfy that requirement in the most cost-effective way, as long as it's technologically feasible and doesn't run up against limits like the supply of land or other natural resources."

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Pesticides

New Records Show EPA Had Concerns About Seresto Pet Collars For Years.

USA Today (8/13) reports behind a paywall that “As early as 2015, the EPA said that Seresto’s incident count ‘ranked #1 by wide margin’ compared to other pet flea and tick products.”

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Research and Development

EPA Partners With Airship Company, NM Agencies In High-Altitude Emissions Study.

The Carlsbad (NM) Current-Argus (8/13, D’Ammassa) reports “helium airship company” Sceye has entered into an agreement with the EPA and two New Mexico state agencies “to monitor carbon emissions and air quality over New Mexico and Texas as well as Mexico.” Sceye and the EPA “will execute an agreement for a five-year study,” to begin next year, “monitoring and sharing of data from instruments flown more than 65,000 feet in the air.” EPA Acting Regional Administrator David Gray “said the cost of the project had not been determined.” Data from the study will “provide a measure of how much emissions from Texas and Mexico contribute to New Mexico’s own air quality concerns” and “help the EPA evaluate the use of high-altitude monitoring and inform policymakers in public health and environmental matters.”

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Toxics

NAS Announces Preliminary Chemicals Committee Lineup.

Inside EPA (8/13) reports, “The National Academy of Sciences is preparing to launch an EPA-sponsored committee to help the agency advance use of new alternate methods (NAMs) for assessing chemicals’ toxicity by reviewing and comparing existing animal toxicology models’ applicability to human health risk assessment, efforts Congress encouraged in its 2016 TSCA reform. NAS recently announced

the preliminary membership of the new committee, including its chair Weihsueh Chiu, a former branch chief at EPA's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) risk analysis program."

Health Groups Urge NAS To Create Stronger PFAS Guidance.

Inside EPA (8/13) reports, "Medical professionals are urging a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) panel to recommend stronger federal guidance on clinical testing for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) exposures but some experts say that implementing any testing policy could be complicated in part because of a lack of health standards."

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Water

EPA Updates Lakes Nutrient Criteria.

Inside EPA (8/13) reports, "EPA has updated its nutrient water quality criteria for lakes and reservoirs for the first time in 20 years, issuing a document that differs only slightly from a proposal that had drawn concern from states and water utilities who charged that it could hamper states' efforts to develop such criteria. But in its response to comments document, issued alongside the criteria, the agency is emphasizing states' flexibility to incorporate local data into the criteria's national models."

Second Court Grants EPA Request For CWA 401 Rule Remand Without Vacatur.

Inside EPA (8/13) reports, "A federal district court judge in Pennsylvania has granted EPA's request to remand without vacatur a Trump-era rule that narrowed how states evaluate whether federal permits protect state water quality standards, becoming the second such judge to reject environmentalists' claims that vacatur is necessary to prevent harm. Such decisions generally ease agency efforts to revise regulations because it avoids a vacatur that environmentalists are seeking, which would otherwise force officials to start any new rulemaking from scratch."

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COVID + Environment

Study Ties Wildfire Smoke To COVID-19 Cases, Deaths.

The Washington Post (8/13) reports a study by Harvard researchers published Friday "found evidence that exposure to elevated levels of fine particle pollution found in wildfire smoke may have led to thousands more cases of covid-19 and more deaths among those who tested positive for the coronavirus." Butte County, CA and Whitman County, WA "showed some of the largest impacts of

wildfire smoke on covid-19 cases: The study's models found that 18.2 percent of Whitman's covid cases last year and 17.3 percent of Butte's could be linked to poor air quality on wildfire days."

Fox News (8/14, Musto) also reports.

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Limetree Bay Refinery

Limetree Refinery Sale Hearing Set For October.

The **St. Thomas Source** (8/13, Borns) reports, "Creditors and lenders of Limetree Bay refinery agreed Wednesday to a sale hearing date of Oct. 19." Bankruptcy Court of the Southern District of Texas Judge David Jones said, "I am waiting for the EPA to tell me their position. Some of the things floating in my head are highly dependent on the views they express. We know EPA can express a wide range of views." The EPA "could relieve a prospective owner" of liability for cleanup of the environmental and property damage caused by the refinery, "however, a decision that would have to be made in negotiations with the USVI government."

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